RAJYA SABHA

Thursday, the 4th May, 1989/the 14th Vaisakha, 1911 (Saka)

The House met at eleven of the clock **Mr. Chairman** in the Chair.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Police Chiefs request for modern arms

*141. SHRI SURESH KALMADI: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Police Chiefs from all over the country have sought modern arms, more benefits and welfare measures for the constabulary in order to meet the law and order situation in the country; and

(b) if so, what steps Government propose to take in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI BUTA SINGH): (a) and (b) Government have been receiving suggestions from State Police forces for improvements in the arms and ammunition available with the Police forces in various States. These are examined by the appropriate levels for further action. State police forces have been provided better weapons to the extent possible. As regards welfare and benefits to the constabulary, the matter is within the purview of the States who are expected to take action from time to time. The Central Government provides them guidance and advice particularly in the sphere of improving Housing for policemen.

SHRI SURESH KALMADI: The arms with the police almost all over the country are of the most obsolete nature. In fact, in the annual conference of the DIGs and IGs of Police recently held in Delhi, I think all of them were unanimous in the urgent need to replace these obsolete weapons. Most of the police force are today having these obsolete 303 rifles whereas we see that the terrorists have been using the most modern weapons. They have the modern carbine, AK-47 rifles etc. They are rapid-fire weapons, whereas our police have to return their fire with 303 guns. In such a case with every bullet fired there is lapse of time. So, one of the reasons of the rise in terrorist activities and other crimes all over the country is that our police does not have a deterrent in the form of modern ammunition. I would like to know what concrete steps are being taken by the government to improve the arms of the Police. Even though Police is a State subject, I would like to know whether the Centre would consider giving them assistance in the form of modern arms.

SHRI BUTA SINGH: This problem was discussed by the heads of the police in various States in a conference in Delhi. A discussion was held, a need was felt that improvement in the weaponry of the State police is very essential and also the identification was made as to which States reuqired imemediately and which States can be attended to a little later. A Standing Committee has been appointed with the DG of BSF, DG Punjab, Commissioners of Police; Delhi and Bombay, DG Haryana, DG Karnataka and Additional Secretary of the Ministry of Home Affairs. Sir, the shortage of weaponry is mainly because there is a demand from all the States and we have to procure these arms from the Ministry of Defence and we are finding it difficult. But I am sure necessary requirements of the police specially in the vulnerable areas are being met and we are providing special assistance to the States which are exposed to the present threat of terrorism and other agitations.

SHRI SURESH KALMADI: Sir, it is understandable that modernisation of the police arms all over the country would take time but at least in the case of immediate vicinity like Parliament House, police can be provided with modern weaponry. Just before coming to the Parliament House, I just went round to see what sort of weapon system is being with the Police outside and I was surprised and shocked to find that they are still carrying obsolete 303 rifles which might not be 10.62 weapons which are re-

loading type of weapon system. I thought that things have changed. I think they are most obsolete arms which the police have got. Would the Home Minister consider giving the police some modern rapid carbon weapons because if you start from here, I think, the rest of the States would follow suit.

SHRI BUTA SINGH: Sir, let me assure the hon. Member and the august House that what he has found is true that regular police has got the same old traditional 303 rifles. But special security arrangements have been made around Parliament Street and other important places in Delhi and the police forces are equipped with the latest weapons located in places like Parliament and other places which are considered to be vulnerable.

SHRI SURESH KALMADI: It is not that. Parliament House itself is not...

SHRI BUTA SINGH: It is covered. You would not like me to show that cover to the hon. Members.

SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL: Mr. Chairman, Sir, the senior police officers in Punjab feel more safe if they are accompanied by the PSOs carrying weapons recovered from the terrorists. I would like to know from the hon. Minister as to what steps are being taken and what has been the allocation for modernising the police force particularly in Punjab because of the fact, Sir, that durng the last 10 years terrorism has played greater havoc with the State than a 7-day war could play?

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: Sir, Punjab has been given substantial amounts of money under the scheme of modernisation. I have got the figures from 1980-81 but I will read figures only for the last three or four years.

MR. CHAIRMAN: He only talked about the weoponry, the type of weaponry that you are providing. Money is not...

SHRI BUTA SINGH: He wants allocation.

MR. CHAIRMAN: He wants allocation. That is all right.

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: Sir, we have given in the last 4 years to Punjab, 1985-86 Rs. 37.38 lakhs; 1986-87 Rs. 70 lakhs; 1987-88 Rs. 61.50 lakhs and 1988-89 Rs. 37.38 lakhs This is apart from the money provided under the "Punjab Action Plan" which is a very substantial amount. So far as the weapons are concerned, I do not think it would be in public interest to give the exact type of weapons but I can tell him broadly that we have given modern weapons numbering approximately 25,000 numbers under various types. We have also given a very large quantity of ammunition. But I do not think it would be in public interest to give the type of weapon.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That is all right. Mr. Yashwant Sinha.

SHRI YASHWANT SINHA: Sir, as you are aware Bihar has got a very bad law and order situation not only in terms of communal riots but also in terms of murders and other kinds civil commotion taking place. Yes, it is almost in an anarchical state. I would like to know from the hon. Minister, through you, Sir, whether there is any proposal pending with the Government of India from the Government of Bihar in regard to the improvement in the police system either in terms of arms or organisation or manpower or welfare or what else.

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: Sir, last year, when a new DGP took over in Bihar, we had extensive discussions with the Government of Bihar. (*Interruptions*. I am taking about last year. We worked out a complete plan particularly for the affected districts of Aurangabad, Jehanabad, Patna and Gaya. We have given them substantial amounts by way of modernisation grants for purchase of weapons as well as for other things. For example, in 1987-88, we gave them Rs. 1,21,62,000 in 1988-89, we gave them

Rs. 63.55 lakh. Their requirements for weapons have been met but I would not say entirely. This is a matter under continuous review.

SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: Sir, there is a news item that there is too much Naxalite problem in Andhra Pradesh and for this reason, the Government of Andhra Pradesh has started distributing arms to villagers to fight Naxalites because of the failure of the State police to protect them. Will not the arming of the police with deadly weapons escalate violence in the rural areas and make peace-loving people more vulnerable to attacks from both sides? Does the Government recognise that increased violence in the countryside is essentially a social problem and cannot be curbed effectively through arms alone?

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: Sir, there have been discussions several times with the Government of Andhra Pradesh on the need to tackle the Naxalite menace. We have given them forces; we have given them money; we have given them weapons and we have made available our training facilities to train their armed police. As far as the new scheme of arming villagers is concerned, I have read only newspaper reports. We are waiting for a more detailed report. But speaking on the basis of newspaper reports, it seems to be a poorly conceived scheme and I think much more thought, much more discussion should go in before they try to go ahead with that scheme of arming villagers.

SHRI JASWANT SINGH: Mr. Chairman, Sir, if you permit me, I would like to ask two clarifications. Firstly, the questionnaire mentions something about the security of Parliament. Therefore, I would seek a clarification: Whose responsibility is the security of the Parliament and to whom do the people who are supposed to secure Parliament report? To whom do they report to? That is the first consideration. The second relates to the state of Rajasthan I have with me a letter very kindly sent to me by the Government of Rajasthan on assistance needed by the Government of Rajasthan to combat terrorism. With your permission, I quote just one of two lines. It says, "We now realise that inter-State border of Rajasthan particularly with Punjab is equally sensitive as the border with Pakistan." A strange statement to make. Sir, Then it says: "Our weaponry badly needs modernisation if we have to come to grips with the terrorists with high sophisticated weapons"—it is again the Government of Rajasthan—"The same holds good for mobility. The terrain in this area is well known and the action will not be effective unless we have sufficient mobility." I am quoting very exactly. Therefore, I would like to know from the Government: Has the Government received any request from the Government of Rajasthan about modernisation of weapons of the police force of Rajasthan, for additional companies of CRPF, modern weaponry as such, vehicles and telecommunication including that for Commando training? If it has, what has the Government done about it? There are two clarifications that I asked.

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: Sir, as far as the Parliament House is concerned, there is a Chief of Security who reports to the hon. Speaker and the security of the Parliament House and the Parliament House Annexe is the responsibility of the Chief of Security. The Delhi Police and the CRPF have placed their men under the control of the Chief of Security. Whatever assistance the Chief of Security wants is made available by the Delhi Police. Man-power is made available by the Delhi Police or the CRPF, but the responsibility is that of the Chief of Security.

As far as Rajastran is concerned, last year, we worked out a very detailed action plan for Rajasthan, particularly, the border district of Ganganagar. The Chief Secretary, the DG and the Police Officers were here. A complete plan has been worked out and the Rajasthan Government is implementing the plan. The Centre's responsibility in the plan is to make available funds to some extent and the weapons. The funds are being made available. Weapons have

been made available. Again, I do not wish to give the type of weapons. But altogether, we have made available approximately 2000 numbers of weapons. This is a continuing process and we will make available more weapons under the action plan which has been finalised between the Rajasthan Government and the Central Government.

MR. CHAIRMAN: There was a word about mobility in the question.

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: This plan includes vehicles, communication equipment, weapons and ammunition. These are the four major items of the plan. This is being implemented in a phased manner. We are also putting up a fence on the border. This plan is being implemented. If I remember right, the approximate amount involved is Rs. 20 crores. Money has been found. The Rajasthan Government is implementing the plan.

SHRI RAOOF VALIULLAH: Mr. Chairman, Sir; there was also a suggestion for a multi-religious anti-riot force to be set up and equipped with modern arms to combat violent mobs and stationed in vulnerable and sensitive areas. I would like to know what the reaction of the various State Governments has been. Secondly, which are the States that have set up police housing corporations and what is their achievement?

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: Sir, as far as the multi-religious anti-riot force is concerned, it is a recommendation which we have commended to the State Governments. So far, we have received a response from the U.P. Government, based on discussions we held almost a year and a half ago, that they would set up a multi-religious anti-riot force. We have asked them to submit the details of that force. The details have not yet come to us. As far as the Central Government is concerned, let me reiterate that the CRPF is a multi-religious force intended to be sent to strife-torn areas.

I think most Governments have a police housing corporation. The most recent one is Punjab. I will give the list to the hon. Member. Twelve to sixteen States have set up such corporations. I will give the list to the hon. Member.

SARDAR JAGJIT SINGH AURORA: Sir, apart from giving weapons, the modern ones, to the police to fight the terrorists, there is also the question of training and the culture that the police must adopt towards the common citizen. I wonder whether anything is being done in this regard considering the number of reports one has had from Punjab in the last few months about the high-handed methods and oppressive measures used by the police which are beyond any law.

SHRI BUTA SINGH: Mr. Chairman, Sir, much publicity has been given to the so-called high-handedness by the police. But at the same time, one has to realise the type of task that the police is performing in Punjab, especially, fighting the terrorists who are gunning down innocent people. Wherever cases of excesses, police excesses, are brought to our notice, we have taken very stern action against the officers concerned. But let me tell you, the publicity that has been mounted is also motivated.

SHRI SUKOMAL SEN: To deal with violent situations and also to deal with the increasing terrorist activities, it is not only necessary to equip the police with modern arms but the intelligence service should also be strengthened. Our police pathetically lack an efficient intelligence service. The gap in the services is often experienced on various occasions when killings particularly of important persons take place. I would like to know whether the Government has any scheme to strengthen the intelligence services of the State Police. It is a State subject. I would like to know whether the Central Government has any scheme to advise the State

Governments, to help them with materials and also to strengthen the intelligence services at the Central level.

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: Sir, intelligence is a very vital aspect of police functioning. Our own intelligence agencies have been considerably upgraded in the last 4 or 5 years. Our training facilities for Policemen and officers taken into our intelligence agencies in the Centre have been considerably enhanced during the last 4 or 5 years. As far as the State Police is concerned, intelligence is a neglected area. In fact, whatever goes by way of intelligence is really political intelligence. They really don't spare the effort and the time for intelligence on terrorism, intelligence on subversion, intelligence on criminal activities and intelligence on anti-national activities. During the last conference of DIGs and IRGs., a whole session was devoted to discussing the intelligence functioning of the State Police forces. The Central agencies run courses to which the officers of the State Governments are invited so that they can upgrade their intelligence capabilities. Most of the State Governments respond to these courses very well. But I would endorse the hon. Member's suggestion that the State Police forces must devote more time, more money and more effort to intelligence functions in a wider sense.

DR. YELAMANCHILI SIVAJI: Sir, is it a fact that modern arms are being smuggled into the country across the border? To combat this, is there any proposal with the Government to allow the State Governments to import arms? That is my first question. My second question is this. Hon. Minister mentioned that enough money has been given to Andhra Pradesh Government to combat extremism and enough weapons have been given. What is the actual amount that has been allotted to Andhra Pradesh to combat extremism and what is the number of weapons that has been given to Andhra Pradesh to meet this extremism?

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: Sir, there is no proposal to allow the State Governments to import arms. On the contrary, Sir, the flow of arms into the country is not by genuine importers. It is by smugglers who have a nexus with terrorists. The answer is to stop them on the border and to seize the arms on the border. Allowing State Governments to import arms is not the answer to smuggling of arms across Punjab and Rajasthan borders.

As regards the amounts given to Andhra Pradesh, we give a grant under the scheme of modernisation. We expect that the Government of Andhra Pradesh will apply it to the area of its need. Today the area of need is to combat the naxalite menace in 6 or 7 affected districts. I cannot say how they use this money although we get the utilisation reports. Again, in the last four years, the following amounts have been given to Andhra Pradesh: 1985-86—63.01 lakhs of rupees; 1986-87—62.05 lakhs of rupees; 1987-88—118.16 lakhs of rupees and 1988-89—63.76 lakhs of rupees.

As far as weapons are concerned, we have given to Andhra Pradesh since October 1987—I am only counting weapons given since October 1987—a total of about 3283 weapons of various types. It would not be in public interest to disclose the type of weapons. We will continue to give them weapons. I told the then Home Minister of Andhra Pradesh that our training facilities are available to their armed Police. We have also given them a certain amount of C.R.P.F.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Question No. 142.

*142. *[The questioner (Shri D. B. Chandre Gowda) was absent. For answer vide Cols. 30-31 infra.]*

Agreement with Canada for providing soft loan

*143. SHRI KAMAL MORARKA:†
SHRI YASHWANT SINHA:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether any agreement has been signed with Canada for providing soft loan assistance to India; and

†The Question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri Kamal Morarka.